

afternoon. It is the one amendment that has strong support in the Senate.

□ 1620

Senate Joint Resolution 1, the Senate companion to Stenholm-Schaefer, was introduced by Majority Leader DOLE and is cosponsored by 40 Senators. Of the amendments we will debate later this week, Stenholm-Schaefer clearly stands the best chance of becoming the law of the land.

Would it be better for the President and Congress to come together and agree to a balanced budget amendment without a constitutional mandate? Of course it would, but experience teaches us that this is not likely to happen.

Even since last year, last March, when the Stenholm-Schaefer amendment failed very narrowly to pass in this House, we have added more than \$150 billion to the national debt, and there is no end in sight to the red ink coming out of Washington. The American people are tired of waiting. We are all tired of waiting, and we need to support a balanced budget amendment to put us on a downward glide path to balance this budget in the year 2002.

Is the balanced budget amendment a substitute for decisive action to reduce the deficit? Of course it is not.

Congress, 2 years ago, did approve a 5-year, \$500 billion, tough deficit reduction plan, and the House and Senate approved a 5-year freeze on discretionary spending starting in 1993, at levels using no inflation. Largely because of that legislation, our deficit has come down and the Nation has enjoyed 3 straight years of deficit reduction, the first time that has happened since Harry Truman was our President.

I supported that plan last year. It was a tough vote, but like many of my colleagues, I knew it was not an end to our deficit reduction efforts, but only one part of a larger effort to balance our budget and to restore fiscal responsibility to this Capitol.

The same is true of this balanced budget amendment. We will vote on this this week, on Thursday or Friday. We will have a vote in the Senate, and I believe that the amendment will then go to the States for ratification.

But nothing in the process changes our basic responsibility here in Congress to go back to our committees and to our subcommittees next week and to continue to achieve real savings and spending reduction. This is our responsibility.

Mr. Speaker, one of my congressional district's most famous citizens, Thomas Jefferson, once said "To preserve our independence, we must not let our rulers load us with perpetual debt. We must make our election between economy and liberty or profusion and servitude." Although we are almost 200 years late, Congress and the States have the opportunity to affirm the truth of Jefferson's observation by adopting the balanced budget amendment to the Constitution.

It is an opportunity that we should seize, and I urge my colleagues to support House Joint Resolution 28, the Stenholm-Schaefer balanced budget amendment to the Constitution. We must work together in a bipartisan fashion to pass this important amendment for our country and for our future. We cannot wait any longer.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. COMBEST). Pursuant to clause 12 of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until 4:45 p.m. today.

Accordingly (at 4 o'clock and 24 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess until 4:45 p.m.

□ 1652

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore [Mr. COMBEST] at 4 o'clock and 52 minutes p.m.

UNFUNDED MANDATE REFORM ACT OF 1995

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. COMBEST). Pursuant to House Resolution 38 and rule XXIII, the Chair declares the House in the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union for the further consideration of the bill, H.R. 5.

□ 1652

IN THE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Accordingly, the House resolved itself into the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union for the further consideration of the bill (H.R. 5) to curb the practice of imposing unfunded Federal mandates on States and local governments, to ensure that the Federal Government pays the costs incurred by those governments in complying with certain requirements under Federal statutes and regulations, and to provide information on the cost of Federal mandates on the private sector, and for other purposes, with Mr. EMERSON in the chair.

The CHAIRMAN. When the Committee of the Whole rose on Friday, January 20, 1995, the amendment offered by the gentleman from New York [Mr. TOWNS] had been disposed of, and section 4 was open for amendment at any point.

Are there further amendments to section 4?

Mr. CLINGER. Mr. Chairman, I move to strike the last word.

As we continue debate on H.R. 5, I want to address some concerns I have about where we are going and how we are going to get there.

Mr. Chairman, last Friday we spent almost 5 hours debating just four amendments to this legislation. We have presently at least, at last count, about 160 amendments pending, and this is under an open rule, and it is an

open rule that I think is well merited in this instance. But I think, Mr. Chairman, if we proceed as we have been going at the very, very slow pace we have been going, we could be here for months on this particular piece of legislation.

I think that perhaps one of the reasons we have seen so many amendments offered is because there is a fair amount of misrepresentation and misinformation circulating about the bill which may account for some of these amendments. I do not question the motives of anybody who has introduced any amendment, although I know that there are some who in very good faith believe that this bill represents a very, very dramatic step back from where we are in terms of regulatory control.

Nevertheless, we do have these amendments, and I think there is misinformation and perhaps it might be helpful to reemphasize just some basic facts about this bill. This bill has very strong support.

The bill has very strong support, I would point out again, not only from the seven major public interest groups, but also the major groups representing the private sector, and among others the legislation is strongly endorsed by the National Governors' Association, the National Conference of Mayors, the National Conference of State Legislatures, National Association of Counties. This legislation is also endorsed by the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, the National Federation of Independent Business, the National Association of Realtors, the National Association of Homebuilders, among others.

So, Mr. Chairman, the list really does go on and on. This has very broad-based support.

The bill also, I would point out, did not arrive just sort of out of the blue. It represents many, many years of hard work by Members on both sides of the aisle, and passed by the Committee on Government Reform and Oversight by a voice vote. I know there were serious concerns about the process that got us to this point, one reason that I supported the open rule, so that we would have a full and open debate on many of the issues that have concerned some Members.

But given the fact that we have this very broad support, I guess the question is: Why would there be this kind of resistance?

The problem is that there seems to be, as I say, misinformation about what the bill does and does not do. This bill does not, I would stress again, and as will be stressed throughout this whole debate, undo environmental and social legislation that is already on the books. The bill does not stop future environmental and social legislation from being passed or costs imposed on State and local governments.

This bill does not stop future reauthorizations or, indeed, it would not convert existing unfunded mandates into mandates subject to a point of